

Neuro-Coding

A Breakthrough in Firearms Training

By: Matt Seibert

As Published by:

*Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, Executive Institute
Law Enforcement Executive Forum - Internal Affairs Investigations
Vol. 4, No. 7-November 2004*

The "Flinch"

One of the greatest challenges we face as firearms instructors when teaching a trainee how to shoot a pistol, is to eliminate the dreaded "flinch".

In the example below it will be assumed that the gun is sighted-in properly, the student understands sight alignment, his dominate eye has been properly diagnosed, the gun fits his hand, his finger position on the trigger is correct, and he has the ability to achieve focal acuity on the front sight.)

If a pistol shooter is grouping low-left, the problem with his performance is generally interpreted as a "flinch" or "jerking the trigger", which causes the muzzle of the gun to dip low and to the left. The shooter is diagnosed as having anticipated the recoil and so on. It is important to realize that the anticipation of recoil is a symptom. It is a manifestation of what is going on in the mind of the shooter. The symptoms manifest themselves physically, but do not always indicate the cause of the problem. Traditionally firearms instructors have relied on "time" and shooting hundreds of rounds of ammunition to desensitize and inoculate the shooter to recoil.

Entrainment

Because our bodies are made up of vibrating molecules, it is sensitive to environmental disturbances, like those produced by the shock wave created by the firing process. When the shooter fires a shot, the release of pressure from the compressed gasses escaping from the muzzle, creates a sound wave that is not only heard but also felt thru out the entire body. The sound wave disrupts the natural vibrations of the body. By interrupting the natural rhythms of the vibrating molecules within the body, the neuro receptors become disrupted and go into a protective mode, creating a sympathetic response within the shooter. (A fight or flight response.) Under a sympathetic state a shooters muscles will tighten, he will experience vassal constriction which reduces blood flow and sensitivity to the trigger finger, adrenaline will be released into his system and he will experience a loss of fine motor movement. With recoil we have to build up immunity to the firing process in order for our bodies to become accustomed to it. An example of this would be like, treating a person's allergies.

In the past, the traditional firearms training method to counteract this has been to expose the shooter to firing repeated rounds of ammunition, thus inoculating and entraining the nervous system to accept the recoil and effects of the firing process to the neuro system. This entrainment process would be staggered over a period of time. In a typical week long class I have found that it isn't until the third or fourth day of exposure to the gunfire, after shooting hundreds of rounds of ammunition that the average student begins to accept the recoil, and the aversion begins to diminish, when utilizing this kind of desensitization process.

Break-Through

If the instructor uses an advanced process to neuro-code the experience, the entrainment process becomes a mute point and the aversion can be eliminated immediately. With breakthroughs in neuro-psychology and a new understanding of how our students neuro-code

their experiences, we can reduce our training time on the range by 50%, reduce the amount of ammunition by 75%, and achieve unprecedented results.

Neuro-Coding

Neuro-Coding is the easiest, fastest, and most permanent way to eliminate the flinch and aversion to recoil. Neuro-coding is the way the brain represents the experience in relation to the internal pictures, sounds and feelings. These pictures, sounds and feelings are called modalities. You first must identify the primary modality in which the aversion is manifesting itself, then shift the modality by manipulating the sub-modalities or changing the venue to another modality altogether. The sub-modalities are the qualities that make up the pictures, sounds and feelings. A very simplistic way of demonstrating how this process works can be done by using a similar example of how we code letters to make words. If you take the word "DOG", and change the letters around by switching the positions of the D and the G to "GOD", we have now created a different meaning of the word. By creating a different meaning we can create a different experience.

One example of a neuro-coding technique that we may use in our training is to change a shooter's physiology and have the student move the internal feeling within his body. Most shooters who manifest an aversion to recoil are usually experiencing a "heavy" or "tight" sensation in their lower diaphragm. Some report they have a "knot in their stomach". I guarantee you, that anytime you see a shooter who looks like he is "passing a kidney stone" when he shoots, he is internalizing those feelings in the pit of his stomach. This physical manifestation is referred to as a kinesthetic sub-modality. By changing the location of the kinesthetic sub-modality to his upper chest, (put the feeling in his chest) we can alter the meaning of the experience. We can change his emotional state from negative to positive.

The process for this is quite simple. 1) Have the shooter become aware of the heavy feeling in his diaphragm; for this is where the fear of recoil is manifesting itself. 2) Have the shooter create a tight feeling in his chest by having him imagine the feeling move upwards from his diaphragm into his upper chest. By having the shooter move the heavy or tight feeling into his upper chest, we have altered the way he represents the fear. This changes his emotional state by giving a new meaning to the experience, thus eliminating the "flinch" and the aversion to recoil.

This is just one of the processes we use to neuro-code a shooter's experience to achieve peak performance with our trainees. You can neuro-code the process of the trigger pull, to isolate the trigger finger from the rest of the hand, and you can neuro-code the visual requirement of achieving focal acuity on the front sight. You can also use neuro-coding to help the trainee manage his emotional state. If the trainee has the ability to manage his state, he can successfully transfer the skills he learned on the range to actual street conditions without any loss of performance.

Neuro-coding techniques have proven to produce amazing results. If Police Academy instructors used neuro-coding intervention techniques, they would be able to reduce the amount of time they spend on the range by 50%, and reduce their ammunition expenditure by 75%. If you do the math, in one year's time this could result in a savings of thousands of dollars. If given the appropriate neuro-coding techniques, any shooter will have the ability to pick-up a pistol and shoot consistent "A Zone" shots with 97% accuracy without any aversion to recoil. More importantly, the officer will have 100% more confidence in his ability.

Firearms Instructor's are invited to sponsor one of our "Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor Development Programs" (*Law Enforcement Only*) to see how Insight's curriculum and neuro-coding techniques might add to your program and enhance your teaching methodologies.